

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

LISTING OF CLAIMS

1. (Original) A sound absorber consisting of two interconnected non-woven fabrics (1,2) bonded through thermoplastic and/or thermoset materials, wherein the non-woven fabric (1) facing towards the sound-emitting source has a layer thickness within a range of from 2 to 15 mm, a density within a range of from 50 to 500 kg/m³, a weight per surface area within a range of from 0.1 to 5 kg/m², and a flow resistance within a range of from 50 to 1000 kNs/m⁴, and the non-woven fabric (2) facing away from the soundemitting source has a layer thickness within a range of from 10 to 100 mm, a density within a range of from 20 to 100 kg/m³, a weight per surface area within a range of from 0.5 to 1 kg/m², and a flow resistance within a range of from 10 to 40 kNs/m⁴, with a total thickness of the sound absorber within a range of from 12 to 30 mm and a total weight per surface area of the sound absorber within a range of from 0.5 to 3 kg/m².

2. (Original) The sound absorber according to claim 1, characterized in that said nonwoven fabric (1) and/or said non-woven fabric (2) consist of natural fibers and/or synthetic fibers.

3. (Currently Amended) The sound absorber according to claim 1, characterized in that said nonwoven fabric (1) and/or said non-woven fabric (2)

contain ~~vegetable natural~~ fibers selected from seed fibers, especially cotton; fruit wall fibers, especially kapok; bast fibers, especially linen, flax, hemp and/or jute; as well as ~~and~~ hard fibers, especially sisal and/or coco including their mixtures including mixtures thereof.

4. (Currently Amended) The sound absorber according to claim 1, characterized in that said nonwoven fabric (1) and/or said non-woven fabric (2) contain synthetic fibers selected from polyolefins, especially polypropylene and/or polyethylene; polyesters, especially polyethylene terephthalate and/or polybutylene terephthalate; and polyamides, especially nylon 6, nylon 12, nylon 66; as well as viscose and rayon including their mixtures.

5. (Currently Amended) The sound absorber according to claim 1, characterized in that said thermoplastic binder is selected from polyolefins and, especially polyethylene and/or polypropylene, as well as ethyl/vinyl acetate copolymers.

6. (Original) The sound absorber according to claim 1, characterized in that said thermoset binder is selected from phenol-formaldehyde resins, epoxy resins and/or polyamide resins.

7. (Currently Amended) The sound absorber according to claim 1, characterized in that the amount of said thermoplastic and/or thermoset binder is from 5 to 50% by weight, ~~especially from 20 to 40% by weight~~, based on said nonwoven fabric (1) and/or said non-woven fabric (2).

8. (Currently Amended) The sound absorber according to claim 1, characterized in that the nonwoven fabric (1) facing towards the sound-emitting source has a layer thickness within a range of from 3 to 10 mm, ~~especially 7 mm~~, a density within a range of from 50 to 300 kg/m³, a weight per surface area within a range of from 0.2 to 2 kg/m², and a flow resistance within a range of from 70 to 500 kNs/m⁴.

9. (Original) The sound absorber according to claim 1, characterized in that the nonwoven fabric (2) facing away from the sound-emitting source has a layer thickness within a range of from 12 to 18 mm, a density within a range of from 30 to 70 kg/m³, a weight per surface area within a range of from 0.6 to 0.8 kg/m², and a flow resistance within a range of from 15 to 30 kNs/m⁴.

10. (Original) The sound absorber according to claim 1, characterized in that the total thickness of the sound absorber is within a range of from 15 to 25 mm, and the total weight per surface area of the sound absorber is within a range of from 1 to 2.5 kg/m².

11. (Currently Amended) The sound absorber according to ~~any of claims 1 to 10~~ claim 1, characterized in that the ratio of the layer thicknesses of the non-woven fabric (1) to the non-woven fabric (2) is from 2:1 to 5:1, ~~especially from 3:1 to 4:1~~.

12. (Currently Amended) The sound absorber according to ~~any of claims 1 to 11~~ claim 1, characterized in that the ratio of the densities of the non-woven fabric (1) to the nonwoven fabric (2) is from 3:1 to 6:1, ~~especially from 4:1 to 5:1~~.

13. (Currently Amended) A method for the preparation of sound absorbers according to ~~any of claims 1 to 12~~ claim 1, characterized by:

- a) pasting a first base material consisting of a textile fiber material and a thermoplastic and/or thermosetting binder into a mold, optionally partially, to form the non-woven fabric 1;
- b) predensifying the base material pasted according to step a) by heating and/or pressure;
- c) pasting a second base material consisting of a textile fiber material and a thermoplastic and/or thermosetting binder, optionally partially, onto the first base material in the mold to form the nonwoven fabric 2;
- d) densifying the undensified sound absorber by the action of heat and pressure; and
- e) cooling down to room temperature.

14. (Currently Amended) A method for the preparation of sound absorbers according to ~~any of claims 1 to 12~~ claim 1, characterized by:

- a) pasting a first base material consisting of a textile fiber material and a thermoplastic and/or thermosetting binder into a mold, optionally partially, to form the non-woven fabric 1;
- b) predensifying the undensified non-woven fabric 1 by the action of heat and pressure;
- c) pasting a second base material consisting of a textile fiber material and a thermoplastic and/or thermosetting binder into a mold, optionally partially, to form the non-woven fabric 2;
- d) predensifying the undensified non-woven fabric 2 by the action of heat and pressure;
- e) superimposing the non-woven fabrics 1,2 and bonding and densifying them by the action of heat and pressure without an adhesive.

15. (Currently Amended) A method for the preparation of sound absorbers according to ~~any of claims 1 to 12~~ claim 1, characterized by:

- a) pasting a first base material consisting of a textile fiber material and a thermoplastic and/or thermosetting binder into a mold, optionally partially, to form the non-woven fabric 1;

- b) predensifying the undensified non-woven fabric 1 by the action of heat and pressure;
- c) pasting a second base material consisting of a textile fiber material and a thermoplastic and/or thermosetting binder into a mold, optionally partially, to form the non-woven fabric 2;
- d) predensifying the non-woven fabric 2 by the action of heat and pressure;
- e) superimposing the non-wove fabrics 1,2 and bonding non-woven fabric 2 to non-woven fabric 1 by needle punching.

16. (Currently Amended) A method for the preparation of sound absorbers according to ~~any of claims 1 to 12~~ claim 1, characterized by:

- a) pasting a first base material consisting of a textile fiber material and a thermoplastic and/or thermosetting binder into a mold, optionally partially, to form the non-woven fabric 1;
- b) predensifying the undensified non-woven fabric 1 by the action of heat and pressure;
- c) pasting a second base material consisting of a textile fiber material and a thermoplastic and/or thermosetting binder into a mold, optionally partially, to form the non-woven fabric 2;
- d) predensifying the non-woven fabric 2 by the action of heat and pressure;

e) superimposing the non-woven fabrics 1,2 and bonding them together by needle punching using different needles.

17. (Currently Amended) Use of a sound absorber according to ~~any of claims 1 to 12~~ claim 1 as hood insulations, exterior bulkhead insulations, interior bulkhead insulations, textile wheel arch shells and lower shield in the engine compartment; as front floor insulations, middle floor insulations, floor coverings, roof liners, top bulkhead insulation, side trim and seat well insulations in the passenger compartment, or as textile wheel arch shells, trunk floor linings, rear shelves, trunk cover linings and trunk side linings in the trunk.

18. (New) The sound absorber according to claim 1 characterized in that the ratio of the layer thicknesses of the non-woven fabric (1) to the non-woven fabric (2) is from 3:1 to 4:1.

19. (New) The sound absorber according to claim 1, characterized in that the ratio of densities of the non-woven fabric (1) to the non-woven fabric (2) is from 4:1 to 5:1.